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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
(✓) Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part (✓) In Full
() Classify as __ () Extend as __ () Downgrade to __
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason ____

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS SHUM, AR
SUBJECT TIMERMANS RELEASE - MORE POSITIVE SIGNALS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2225

1. FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR CASTROS MEETING WITH ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GEN VIOLA IN WHICH THE LATTER PROMISED THERE WOULD BE FORWARD MOVEMENT IN THE TIMERMAN CASE, THE AMBASSADOR MET WITH MRS TIMERMAN ON THURDAY, MARCH 30. THE WIFE OF THE IMPRISONED EDITOR OF LA OPINION RELATED THAT THE FAMILY HAD RECEIVED A NUMBER ASSURANCES THAT HER HUSBAND WOULD SHORTLY BE TRANSFERRED FROM PRISON TO A MODIFIED FORM OF DETENTION, EITHER HOUSE ARREST OR CONDITIONAL LIBERTY (DG, HIS MOVEMENTS RESTRICTED TO BUENOS AIRES). SHE STATED THAT HOPES WERE VERY HIGH.

2. A SENIOR NAVY STAFF MEMBER INFORMED EMBASSY POLOFF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29 THAT THE SECRETARY GENERALS OF THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES HAD AGREED TO A NAVY PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER JACOBO TIMERMAN TO HOUSE ARREST "AT THE END OF THE MONTH". THE NAVY HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE GUARDS FOR THE TIMERMAN RESIDENCE TO INSURE HIS WELL BEING.

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3. HECTOR TIMERMAN, THE PUBLISHERS SON, ALSO MET WITH EMBASSY POLOFF ON MARCH 29. THE YOUNG TIMERMAN SAID THAT

THAT THE FAMILY HAD BEEN ASSURED BY A SENIOR NAVAL OFFICER OVER THE WEEKEND THAT HIS FATHERS RELEASE FROM PRISON WAS IMMINENT.

4. THE TIMERMAN PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PATRIMONIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CONAREPA) ARE ALSO MOVING TOWARDS A CONCLUSION. HECTOR TIMERMAN REPORTED THAT THE FAMILYS ATTORNEY WAS TOLD BY ARMY GENERAL AUDITOR CUESTA, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONAREPA, LAST WEEK THAT THE CONAREPA HAS GIVEN THE STATE PROSECUTOR UNTIL THE END OF MARCH TO FINISH HIS EXAMINATION OF THE LEGALITY OF THE ACQUISITION OF TIMERMANS ASSETS AND POSSESSIONS. GENERAL CUESTA SAID THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT PROSECUTOR IS UNABLE TO RAISE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THE LEGALITY OF TIMERMANS POSSESSIONS THAT CONAREPA WILL LIFT THE FREEZE ON TIMERMANS POSSESSIONS.

5. HECTOR TIMERMAN REITERATED THAT HIS FATHERS ONLY MAJOR POSSESSION IS 45 PERCENT OF THE LA OPINION NEWSPAPER AND PUBLISHING PLANT. DAVID GRAIVERS WIDOW OWNS THE OTHER 45 PERCENT OF THE SHARES BUT THESE ASSETS ARE BLOCKED BY THE GOVERN MENT. THE NEWSPAPERS FORMER GENERAL MANAGER MR ROTHENBURG CONTROLS THE OTHER 10 PC, WHICH HE WAS GIVEN BY GRAIVER AND TIMERMAN. ROTHENBURG NOW LIVES IN SPAIN. JACOBO TIMERMAN REFUSED AN EARLY OFFER OF GRAIVERS WIDOW TO SELL THE OUTSTANDING SHARES OF LA OPINION AS HE DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT CAPITAL FOR THE PURCHASE. HECTOR TIMERMAN ADDED THAT HIS FATHER AND ROTHENBURG HAD CONTROLLING INTEREST OF THE NEWPAPER AND SAW NO NEED TO RAISE THE LARGE AMOUNT OF CAPITAL TO PURCHASE THE OUT STANDING 45 PC. MRS TIMERMAN INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT A PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF LA OPINION SHARES [redacted]

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HAD NEVER BEEN ACTED ON. SHE SAID THAT THE NEWPAPER WAS PROSPEROUS WHEN IT WAS TAKEN OVER, BUT THAT THE FAMILY HAD NO EXPECTATION OR INTEREST IN COMPENSATION. THEIR ONLY INTEREST WAS MR TIMERMANS FREEDOM.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE STRENGTH AND MULTIPLICITY OF THE SIGNALS BOTH WE AND THE TIMERMAN FAMILY HAVE BEEN RECEIVING LEAD US TO BE OPTIMISTIC THAT TIMERMAN WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO HOUSE ARREST WITHIN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIMEFRAME.
CASTRO